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**Kristin Brooks Hope Center**

Application for Review of WCB Order Temporarily  
Reassigning KBHC's Three Toll Free Suicide  
Prevention Hotline Numbers  
CC Docket No. 95-155

Opposition to SAMHSA's Request for the Permanent  
Reassignment of Three Toll Free Suicide Prevention  
Hotline Numbers  
WC Docket No. 07-271

# Founding of KBHC

- » **KBHC is a non-profit organization dedicated to suicide prevention.**
  - » Founded by H. Reese Butler II in 1998 following his wife's suicide after a battle with postpartum depression.
  - » Initially funded with the sale of his marital home and his wife's life insurance.
- » **KBHC provides critical counseling services to people in need through the use of toll-free numbers.**
  - » KBHC's numbers make use of automatic geographic routing services to automatically route calls received to trained crisis counselors in the caller's community.

# KBHC's Operations

» KBHC began operations in 1998 providing access to counseling centers through 1-888-SUICIDE.

» Shortly thereafter, it began offering services through 1-800-SUICIDE as well.

» Building upon its original mission, KBHC began providing crisis counseling through the following numbers:

•(800) SUICIDE  
•(888) SUICIDE  
(Suicide Prevention)

•(800) SUICIDA  
•(877) SUICIDA  
(Spanish speaking)

•(800) PPD-MOMS  
(New Mothers)

•(800) GRAD-HLP  
•(877) GRAD-HLP  
(Graduate students)

•(877) 495-0009  
(National Mental Health  
Awareness Campaign)

•(877) VET-2-VET  
(Veterans Services)

•(800) 442-HOPE  
•(800) 722-9498  
•(800) 827-7571  
•(866) 771-1276  
•(888) 861-8460  
(Hopeline Network)

•(866) YOUTHLINE  
(At-risk youth)

» KBHC's hotlines have received more than 2 million calls.

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# **KBHC's Dispute with SAMHSA**

- » **Prior to December 2004, KBHC received a substantial portion of its funding for the operation of the suicide hotlines from a federal grant administered by SAMHSA.**
- » **SAMHSA declined to renew the grant in 2004. This required KBHC to locate new funding sources even as use of its services continued to grow.**
- » **During the summer of 2006, KBHC fell behind in its payments to its carriers, AT&T and Patriot Communications.**
- » **At one point during negotiations between KBHC and its carriers, Patriot threatened to cease routing calls to KBHC's numbers.**
  - » To ensure continued operation of the numbers, SAMHSA agreed in August 2006 to pay carrier invoices for 1-800-SUICIDE, 1-888-SUICIDE, and 1-877-SUICIDA.
  - » On December 12, 2006, SAMHSA submitted a request to the FCC asking the FCC to unilaterally reassign five of KBHC's numbers to SAMHSA.

# KBHC's Dispute with SAMHSA

- » **On Jan. 22, 2007, the WCB granted SAMHSA's request and temporarily transferred KBHC's three most heavily used numbers to SAMHSA for a period of 12 months.**
  - » Transferred Numbers: (800) SUICIDE, (888) SUICIDE, (877) SUICIDA.
- » **SAMHSA has routed traffic to these numbers to its own competing hotline: (800) 273-TALK.**
  - » SAMHSA does not operate any crisis centers itself; like KBHC, it has created a network of crisis centers to which it routes calls.
  - » SAMHSA network makes use of many of the same crisis centers to which KBHC routed calls.
- » **On Nov. 20, 2007, SAMHSA filed a petition to have KBHC's three suicide prevention numbers permanently reassigned to SAMHSA.**
  - » Petition is still pending before the WCB, as is KBHC's Application for Review of the temporary order.

## **The WCB Reassigned the Numbers to Ensure the Numbers Would Continue To Operate**

- » **The WCB Ordered the temporary reassignment of KBHC's toll-free numbers because KBHC's finances presented a “significant threat” to the continued availability of the numbers.**
  - » The WCB found that “[t]he financial vulnerability surrounding KBHC's provision of the suicide prevention hotlines poses a significant threat to the continued availability of this critical public service.”
  - » The decision emphasized “the Commission’s interest in ... ensuring the continuation of the services provided by the suicide prevention hotlines [because of] the vast number of calls made to them seeking assistance.”
- » **The language of the WCB’s order makes clear that the assignment was to be reassessed if conditions changed.**
  - » “During the duration of this temporary reassignment, we will examine the continued utility and effectiveness of our action to determine whether any extension is warranted or whether we should revisit or modify this assignment.”

## **KBHC is Ready, Willing, and Able To Resume Operation of the Suicide Prevention Hotlines**

- » **KBHC has resolved all disputes and contingent liabilities.**
  - » When SAMHSA requested the Commission reassign the suicide prevention numbers, KBHC owed approximately \$67,900 to Patriot and approximately \$650,000 to AT&T, and was in a billing dispute with each carrier.
- » **KBHC entered into a confidential settlement agreement with Patriot in February 2007 that resolved all issues between KBHC and Patriot.**
- » **In May 2008, KBHC and AT&T entered into a confidential settlement agreement under which KBHC resolved the debt to AT&T pursuant to a payment plan.**
  - » KBHC made the final payment under that plan in August 2008. KBHC has no further debt or dealings with AT&T.

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## **KBHC is Ready, Willing, and Capable of Resuming Operation of the Suicide Prevention Numbers**

- » **KBHC has eliminated all of its outstanding debts of any significance.**
  - » Any current debts or liability are small, routine bills.
- » **Since reassignment of the three toll-free numbers to SAMHSA, KBHC has continued to operate its eleven other crisis counseling toll-free numbers.**
  - » During this time, KBHC has facilitated the answering of tens of thousands of calls without interruption and with the same high level of quality that KBHC has consistently provided.
- » **KBHC has maintained agreements with its network of crisis centers and has entered into partnerships with new telecommunications partners.**
  - » KBHC has entered into a carrier agreement with Micktel Corporation to receive carrier services identical to those used by SAMHSA.

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## **KBHC Can Operate the Line For 2 Years With Existing Assets**

- » **KBHC currently has cash reserves in excess of \$240,000 set aside for the operation of the three disputed numbers.**
  - » Sufficient for two years of uninterrupted service for the numbers.
    - » Based on historic call volumes and its current agreement with Micktel, KBHC estimates a monthly cost of approximately \$9,100, or approximately \$110,000 annually.
  - » KBHC expects its fundraising success to continue during this time, and hopes not to rely on this cash reserve.
- » **KBHC operates its lines more efficiently than SAMHSA.**
  - » SAMHSA's inflated cost projections fail to consider service options available from competitive carriers.
  - » KBHC obtains full services from Micktel for less than 6 cents per minute; SAMHSA pays more than three times as much for the same services.
  - » SAMHSA also conflates its support of the crisis centers to which the suicide prevention hotlines route callers with the operation of the hotlines themselves.
    - » KBHC has never paid crisis centers to take calls from the numbers.

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## **KBHC's Finances and Fund Raising Efforts**

- » **KBHC's successful fundraising ensures that KBHC will be able to operate the suicide prevention hotlines for the foreseeable future.**
  - » KBHC's annual "Pick Up the Phone Tour" and accompanying CD are expected to raise in excess of \$100K (based on past 5 years).
    - » Fuel Records (distributed by EMI) has agreed to donate 100% of all royalties of the Pick UP the Phone Tour CD (featuring Jay-Z, Janet Jackson, and Beyonce) to KBHC.
  - » KBHC launched its 99 Club Fund Raising Program, and already has over 200 volunteers and civic organization pledged to contribute almost \$1 million.
  - » Recently raised over \$30K in five days through partnerships with PostSecret.com and To Write Love On Her Arms.
  - » Recipient of repeat grants from BMS, Astra Zenica, and Pfizer.

# **KBHC Plans New Training and Awareness Programs**

## **» Veterans Services**

- » KBHC currently operates 877-VET2VET for veteran crisis and counseling calls.
- » KBHC hopes to work with the Veterans Administration to coordinate veterans services when 800-SUICIDE is returned to KBHC.

## **» Community Outreach**

- » KBHC's various music tours and related events are not only for fundraising, they also bring awareness of the counseling services to at-risk youth populations.

## **» Counselor Training**

- » KBHC has initiated a program to pay one-half the cost of counselor certification-training for participating crisis centers.
- » KBHC will reimburse the remaining 50% of costs for counselors who complete the training and work for at least 200 hours.

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## **KBHC Pledges A Smooth Transition**

- » **KBHC pledges to work with SAMHSA to ensure a smooth transition back to KBHC's operations.**
- » **Transition made easier because:**
  - » SAMHSA does not operate the phone lines or call centers, instead relying on many of the same local call centers as KBHC.
  - » KBHC has maintained all of its capabilities during the reassignment period.
- » **To ensure continuity, KBHC will agree to allow SAMHSA to continue to operate the numbers for next 12 months or until the end of its current program cycle, whichever comes first.**

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Questions?